

NEW INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN



DOCUMENTS OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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IN REPLY TO TROTSKY

BY NATIONAL BUREAU • L.R.W.P.

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LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

126 EAST 16th STREET, NEW YORK CITY

VOLUNTARY LABOR

(continued from page d)

The road to the Fourth International cannot be that of the ICL or of the SAP. The revolutionary elements in the SAP will have to sharpen their struggle as the objective situation approaches a crisis, on the war question and the political crisis in France. They will have to get rid of the reactionary, centrist and pro-Stalinist elements who refuse to accept a revolutionary position. Recent articles in "Neue Front" indicate that they have been able to correct the SAP line on the questions of the German perspectives and the necessity of criticizing the 7th Congress of the CI. They can use these points, together with the internal discussion on the war question, as a wedge to broaden and concretize their differences with the reactionary elements. In this, they must take the offensive and secure the support of revolutionary elements outside. Many of the old elements will go and new elements will come. But the whole development will be in a revolutionary direction only on condition that the conscious revolutionary elements within and without these organizations pose the problem of building the new revolutionary International in struggle against centrism, against opportunism and against sectarianism.

In this foreword, we have dealt primarily with the points raised by the SAP letter, the article in "Neue Front" on the RSAP, and incidentally the International Youth Bulletin, in order to bring out our position on the problem of building the 4th International. We cannot go into a great many other questions raised by the documents reprinted here, for sheer lack of space, or else we should have had to issue another Bulletin for the purpose. We would particularly want to criticize Pivert's development in relation to Trotsky's method of building the 4th International; to counterpose a revolutionary criticism of the development of the Soviet Union to Doriot's line; to point out why it was impermissible for Trotsky to break on the basis of an ultimatum with the International Youth Bureau (Oslo Bureau) why it is not dying away as a result of the split but continuing to grow and at the same time why it will not "evolve" into a new revolutionary Youth International. The fundamental points involved will come up again and again on the road to the new communist International, and we shall deal with them in future issues.

Editorial Board

LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

F O R E W O R D

The experience of the past twenty years has proven up to the hilt, the correctness of Lenin's line on the building of the party; "unite the revolutionists, break with the reformists and centrists". This slogan was first carried out in Russia on a national scale from 1903 to 1914. The experience since then has shown that it has to be carried out on an international scale.

In building the new International we believe it is necessary to begin with the unification of revolutionary forces which can find themselves in agreement on the essentials of a revolutionary program. We must begin with those nearest to us and work outward, in order to reach the revolutionary elements in the centrist organizations, in the Socialist Party and in the Communist Party, and those who have no party affiliation at present.

From the above, it will be clear why so much of the material in the "NEW INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN" is concerned with those groups and tendencies which have already declared themselves for a new communist International. Much of this material deals on the one hand, with Trotsky and the Internationalist Communist League, on the other, with the Socialist Workers Party of Germany (SAP) and the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity (IAG) to which it belongs. Trotsky puts the question, "Are you with us or with the SAP against me?" The SAP accepts this way of putting the question. But neither of them is actually a center for international regroupment. This center must still be built.

We reprint their documents and open a discussion and criticism with a definite political objective. Our purpose is to clarify the principle questions and to help the revolutionary elements in these organizations to differentiate and ultimately separate themselves, organizationally and politically, from reformists and centrists. On this question we disagree doubly with the policies of Trotsky. He wishes to influence centrist and reformist elements from within by joining their organization and accepting its discipline. We reject this policy as opportunist. On the other hand, he is opposed to maintaining contact with such organizations as the SAP and the IAG from the standpoint of an independent revolutionary organization, able to express its whole position, free from the discipline of reformists and centrists, and working to the same ends as the revolutionary elements inside such organizations. We regard Trotsky's rejection of such a policy as sectarianism.

Even now, the ICL has a completely ambiguous position toward the SAP, at one time insisting on building the new International "without and against the SAP", then inviting it to join as one of the original signers of the "Open Letter of Five" and then publishing this "Open Letter" without waiting for the reply of the SAP. We regard this reply as a document worth discussing and criticizing, especially since the Trotskyite organizations have polemicized against it from their point of view without presenting the document itself.

In this document and elsewhere the SAP insists on the fact that it is for a new communist International. It says, "...It is not a question of turning to groups who like all of us are convinced of the need for a new communist International" (page 8, this issue), and again, "First of all we are not in favor of basing the new International on some kind of a new foundation, not further described, but we want it to be built on the foundations of communism further developed out of the basic ideas of Marx, Luxemburg and Lenin". (page 12). In the article of their paper "Neue Front" on the crisis in the RSAP, they say, "...Every reader of the Neue Front knows that we stand for the building of a new communist International, now as well as before" (page 17).

They also speak out quite sharply against centrism. "The struggle against centrism requires not only example, propaganda and criticism, but above all, an active and practical policy. It is necessary to be able to show a concrete way out, because only in this way can the masses be convinced of the inadequacy of centrism. Every thought of a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ International is to be fought by pointing out the necessity of a revolutionary basis for unity, and moreover by concrete examples and proposals." (page 11)

And in many of their criticisms, this emphasis on concreteness and against sectarianism leads them to a ~~correct~~ emphasis on such points as planned economy under capitalism (a vital question for Belgian and Dutch workers today, and others tomorrow); to criticisms of the poor formulations on the SP and CP in the "Open Letter". Where the "Open Letter" denied that a 7th Congress of the CI would be held, they point out that "this Congress will have a purely theatrical character and possibly also will lead the way to the liquidation of the CI". (page 10)

But it is not enough to speak of the need for a new communist International, to declare that one is against centrism, and to recommend an approach to SP and CP workers based on their own experiences. It is also necessary to take a position on the questions of program, to recognize the role of the Party in leading the workers and not only in listening to their immediate moods. Above all, it is necessary to draw organizational conclusions from political differences.

It is precisely on these points that the SAP does not stand on a revolutionary position. When it says that the struggle against centrism "requires not only example, propaganda and criticism but above all, an active and practical policy", it is putting "above all" that which can only flow from a clear revolutionary program on which there is full agreement within the party. But on the very question of war which raises the practical and theoretical questions of the movement to the very first plane, there is no agreement within the party. The "Maristische Tribune", the internal discussion organ of the party, in its first issue contains two articles, one of which is essentially a statement of the Stalinist position on the "progressive wars to defend the Soviet Union" and the other adopts the position of revolutionary defeatism. In the columns of the "Neue Front" itself, fundamental differences are seen as to the estimation of the Soviet Union, of the perspectives in Germany. Revolutionary and centrist elements, including some sympathetic to Stalinism, are struggling within it.

But the SAP has been in existence for over four years. How does it happen that it has not reached agreement within itself on these questions of program? Apparently they are putting concrete activity "above all" in the sense of subordinating and postponing questions of program within the party, as their representative Schwab did at the IAG last February.

On the role of the party both the "Open Letter" and the SAP criticism are silent. Neither raises the question of how to build the party, each is satisfied with its actual position, the Trotsky groups as a detached vanguard cut off from the masses, and the SAP as a rearguard of the masses basing its policy on the moods of the masses today and not upon what is needed tomorrow. They are impressed with the dangers of isolation "if we put the organizational slogan of the 4th International which is necessarily abstract for the masses, exclusively in the foreground." But it is the task of the revolutionary organization precisely to make the slogan of the 4th International (in the sense of a new communist International and not as a trade mark for Trotsky and his immediate adherents), a living reality for the masses. It cannot wait until the masses accept the slogan and then come out in

favor of it. It must come out in favor of it first and then proceed to build it. It is entirely incorrect for the Trotskyites to proclaim the immediate launching of the 4th International as the perspective, but no less incorrect to postpone the propaganda for the new communist International on the ground that the masses are not ready for it. That would be a reason for not announcing that it has already been created but no reason not to go ahead and build the foundation for it.

The SAP states that it is against centrism, yet its criticism of Trotsky attacks only the sectarianism of his policy and makes no criticism of its opportunism. Do they still approve his sending the Trotskyite groups into the Socialist Party in France and everywhere else except Holland and the USA? Do they approve of the policy of these groups when in the SP? Was it correct for them to drop the slogan of soviets, to come out for the constituent assembly and a workers and peasants government in the shape of a Blum-Cachin coalition, when they themselves were involved in Blum's party? Does the silence on this point mean that they regard these policies as revolutionary realism?

With regard to the problem of building the Party, we hear a great deal about working actively and practically with centrists, in order, on the basis of common agreement on certain fundamentals to drive masses of workers into action. So far so good, and we agree that failure to do this has been one of the great weaknesses particularly of the Trotskyites. But what about the equally necessary task of utilizing these concrete actions to expose and break with the hopelessly centrist and reformist leaderships? Action alone subordinated to such policies and such leaders will not bring the masses forward on the road to revolution. The disappointments and disillusionment will not in and of themselves show them the revolutionary way out but may lead to indifference. It is precisely the function of the revolutionists in such action to prepare for the inevitable break with the centrists and reformists by clarifying and differentiating the revolutionists from them. Otherwise we have simply, in spite of declarations and wishes to the contrary, unity for unity's sake. This means in the final analysis, subordination to centrists and reformists. Have the SAP members forgotten that their party itself arose from a progressive split in the German SP and another in the Brandlerites?

How does the SAP estimate the perspectives of the IAG? As it is today, the IAG is a loose federation of groups and parties of conflicting tendencies, orientating toward the 2nd, the 3rd, a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ or a 4th (communist) International. It is not an international center because it has no discipline, its resolutions are not necessarily binding on any of its members. Its parties have in common only the fact that they are not in the 2nd or 3rd Internationals. The SAP speaks of utilizing the IAG as a basis "in order to develop out of it the new International" (page 18). But it also speaks of "working together for the new communist International" (page 12). Do they imagine that the IAG will "develop" into the new International, by gradual evolution and reform? Or do they believe as we do, that in order to build an international revolutionary party, it will be necessary to clarify, differentiate and to break with centrist and reformist elements? The NAP (Norwegian Labor Party) has already left the IAG; but not as a result of the policy of the SAP. If the break with the NAP had been the result of a principled political fight resulting in the strengthening of the revolutionary influence within the parties of the IAG, this break would have strengthened the revolutionary forces, including the healthy worker elements in the NAP, and weakened the centrist and reformist elements; first of all, the leadership of the NAP. A consistent struggle for a revolutionary program within the parties of the IAG, using the IAG as a contact center, would drive away many reformist and centrist elements, but would win over and consolidate revolutionary forces.

But this does not mean that the IAG can take the place of an international revolutionary center. It means that an international revolutionary center must be created, and must utilize the existing IAG precisely in order to agitate within it for the new 4th International. It cannot make acceptance of the 4th International a condition for its entering such a federation. This was the ultimatum that Trotsky presented to the IAG and also the International Youth Bureau.

But if we cannot demand acceptance of the new Communist International in advance, there is no excuse for any weakness or vacillation in constantly propagandizing for it and trying to convince the healthy elements within the IAG that the building of the new International is the central task and that it is indispensable to carrying out every other serious task. The SAP will not advance the building of the new International by making unity in the IAG a fetish as it accuses Trotsky of doing with the 4th International.

The most unsatisfactory part of the document is the section dealing with war. Precisely because it tests the concreteness and practical activity which the SAP desires, we find the policy actually adopted intolerably loose, vague and impractical. It speaks of "utilizing the desire of the broad masses of the people for peace", and of "beginning the broadest united front with all forces that have a real will for peace" (page 11). This approach takes no account of the realities of the class struggle and reflects the Stalinist ideology of the People's Front and the Leagues Against War and Fascism. Here again we must begin with what is closest to us, the revolutionary sections of the proletariat, and through them mobilize the masses of the proletariat. A revolutionary policy that is realistic will draw the lessons of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Chinese revolution, which the SAP accepts, and point out that it is always under all circumstances fatal to subordinate the independent class activity of the proletariat to that of the petty bourgeoisie, and that it is always under all circumstances necessary for the proletariat, led by its class conscious vanguard, to retain both its class independence and leadership as a class in united fronts with the petty bourgeoisie, together with whom it constitutes "the people". A revolutionary party leading the masses of the proletariat and sweeping behind it the masses of the petty bourgeoisie, in a Leninist practice of the united front can mobilize the masses in a revolutionary struggle against war. Only then can a united front with the petty bourgeoisie, thoroughly correct in itself, be anything else but a trap for the proletariat. But for this, a clear conception of the role of the party within the proletariat and of the independence and initiative of the proletariat with relation to the other classes of society is necessary. Such formulas as those cited above, tend to confuse and blur this clear conception, and make possible all kinds of pacifist and petty bourgeois illusions.

On the People's Front and on the Soviet Union, the SAP reply accepts the Stalinist position without criticism, instead of sharply rejecting it on principle grounds. Neither the SAP nor the IAG can function as a progressive factor for the building of the new Communist International merely by continuing their present policies, structure and method. In both there are revolutionary elements, and centrist elements moving leftward as well as reactionary centrist and opportunist elements. This evolution must lead to either an open struggle of the incompatible elements or the capitulation of the "left" to the right wing and center. It is the duty of revolutionists to work toward the former course through comradely criticism and not through wholesale condemnations, bureaucratic ultimatums and mere abstention. It is also our duty not to foster any illusions that the present policy and composition of either of these organizations is correct and Marxian.

(Continued inside front cover)

FRANCE:

THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT AND THE TROTSKYITE EXPERIENCE

(From "L'INTERNATIONALE", Nov. 15th, 1935)

Marceau Pivert has finally decided to show the French proletariat that he is its great revolutionary leader. All those who have had doubts on this score will now be reassured.

He has created the "revolutionary left" of the S.F.I.O. (French Socialist Party) and elaborated the platform of this left-wing. This platform is composed of seven short paragraphs; each one of which is a tour de force.

The first proposes to the S.F.I.O. to transform the anti-fascist defense into an offense against capitalism. By this ultra-revolutionary proposition the "left" tries to present the actual position of the Socialist Party as a position of defense against fascism, although it is, in reality, a position of capitulation before it. The "left" also wishes to direct the discontent of the most advanced workers of its party along the lines of revolutionary phrasemongering. Upon examining the actual relation of class forces, a true revolutionary policy would consist in organizing the proletariat on a political basis, for an active defense against fascism, and on the trade-union field, against the attacks of the employer and the State. This really defensive position would permit the proletariat to gather together its forces, match them with the forces of the enemy in the daily struggles, and to pass on finally to the offensive against capitalism and its rule. To speak today of engaging in this offensive is chatter from the mouths of unconscious men and shameful deceit from the mouth of pretenders of Marceau Pivert's type.

The second paragraph proposes to transform the Peoples Front into a peoples front of struggle. But it carefully avoids explaining to us how this transformation can be realized when the Peoples Front is composed of agents of the bourgeoisie (Herriot, Daladier, etc.), of faithful valets of the bourgeoisie, (Blum, Evrard, etc.) and hirelings of Stalin (Thorez, Cachin), who carries on trade with the French and world bourgeoisie to the harm of international proletarian interests.

To speak of transforming the Peoples Front instead of denouncing it signifies becoming an accomplice to all the crimes it has already committed and is called upon to commit in the future against the proletariat.

The third paragraph calls for a people's militia and committees of public safety which will offer competition to the power of the bourgeoisie. This grandiose revolutionary task must be accomplished, according to the "left" by the Socialist Party, that is to say, by a party whose policy and action for at least twenty years is an unbroken chain of capitulations and treasons. Socialist workers of the left, remember that the history of the workers movement does not know of any occurrence where a party sunk in treachery has lifted itself up and become once again the revolutionary guide of the proletariat. On the contrary, this history teaches us that when a party sinks into treachery, the proletariat replaces it, in a more or less long period of time, by another which takes steps forward for the entire working class towards its complete liberation.

To pretend to the workers that one can reform the Socialist Party is the negation of the lessons of the history of the workers movement and a supreme attempt to block or at least retard preparatory work for the creation of a class party.

The fourth point calls for revolutionary defeatism during war. This stand would have had our approval and adhesion if it had been accompanied by an affirmation of the necessity of anti-militarist work within the army, before war. We consider that without this affirmation, to extol revolutionary defeatism is only throwing dust in one's eyes because it signifies replacing today's indispensable work with a promise for tomorrow.

The fifth point calls for liberation of colonial peoples and aid to movements in favor of their liberation. In order to pose as one hundred percent revolutionary, it warns socialists not to compromise too much with native feudal elements, capitalist or petty bourgeois. However, as if by chance, this paragraph forgets to warn socialists against compromising with a party (even if it calls itself "socialist") which helps its bourgeoisie in its policy of colonial plundering, as for example the SFIO does. Such a warning would have contributed much more towards the development of revolutionary consciousness among the socialists than the first. But it does not harmonize with the great "revolutionary" principles of Marceau Pivert.

The sixth section is for organic unity, without determining the causes that are pushing the Socialist Party and the Communist Party towards uniting. Failure to examine these causes arises from the desire to hide from the workers the actual mission of both these parties which consists in making acceptable to the proletariat the community of interests of the Soviet bureaucracy and the French bourgeoisie and consequently making the workers march alongside the bourgeoisie. To utter this truth to the workers signifies unmasking the real policy of the communist and socialist parties and warning them against the betrayal these parties will commit after unification. Such a task does not enter into the plans of the "revolutionary left"; it tries to hide this fact by chatter about the necessity of "greater internal democracy". Socialist workers, such necessary and great internal democracy does not always answer the question: what will be the role actually of the unified party? The reply to this question alone must determine your attitude towards organic unity.

The seventh point informs us simply that "the goal of the revolutionary left is to win over a majority of the militants of the SFIO to these viewpoints."

We believe we have sufficiently pointed out the real content of the viewpoints of the "revolutionary left" for each reader of "L'Internationale" to realize that it will not take any great efforts to realize its goal. We draw this conclusion without taking into account the possible evolution of this "left", with inevitable internal limitations, which must lead to an organic break with their party.

After having examined the political platform of the "revolutionary left" let us endeavor to determine the motives behind its constitution. About a year ago, the "Communist League" (official Trotskyites) entered the Socialist Party in order to, so they said, approach the masses, educate the militants, and through this canal create the new revolutionary party. But once within, the Trotskyites saw themselves as far away from the masses as before the entrance. The work of drawing closer to the masses had been replaced by flirtations with the left-socialists. They did everything to raise the prestige of this left-wing and particularly of its most confused and typical representative, Marceau Pivert. Even when the Trotskyites have criticized him, it was in such a manner that it resembled praises rather than criticisms. This "skillful" and "intelligent" tactic of the Trotskyites seemed to be, by far, their strong side even to those opposed to entrance into the SFIO for they succeeded in a very short space of time in gaining great influence over the young socialists of the Seine District. The constitution of the "revolutionary left" was necessary to make it clear to all those who are not afraid to look reality in the face that the influence of the Trotskyites was not the

result of their fine tactic, and their truly revolutionary educational work but the result of the fact that they adapted themselves to the state of mind of the revolting elements of the Socialist Party. It is natural that these elements are concentrated in the Seine District, and above all in the youth. After the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the youth, the majority of the Seine Federation solidarized themselves with them.

Just at this moment the creation of the "revolutionary left" intervenes. Its role is explained by this strange co-incidence. It consists first in sowing trouble among the youth revolting against the direction of the Party, and then snatching them away from the Trotskyites; and by that facilitating the expulsion of the latter (the Trotskyites) by the National Council. The rapid successes won by the "revolutionary left" confirm our opinion about the weakness of the Trotskyite influence.

Bolshevik-Leninists and young socialists, the Trotskyist tragic-comedy which is drawing to its close, and the "revolutionary left" comedy which is beginning, must arouse you to restudy the question of an independent revolutionary organization and to consider our position not as the reflection of our so-called sectarianism, but as our profound conviction based upon the international experience of the proletariat that nothing so solid and durable can bring profit to the proletarian revolution than its INDEPENDENT class organization.

BRAZIL:

"FRENCH TURN" AND THE MOVEMENT FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL

Rio de Janeiro, 1935

Dear Comrade,

.....In Brazil we work under the most rigorous illegality and are always persecuted by the most arbitrary terrorism which deports and kills the militants very frequently.

Such an incident occurred a few days after I broke with the dissident group of the I.C.L. (Brazilian Section)

It is very difficult to inform you about the revolutionary situation in Brazil because it is in the state of a really tremendous chaos. Inside the I.C.L. there is a sort of a devilish bureaucracy which chokes all possible evolution. I am preparing a report about the political situation in Brazil which I will send to you later on. In the meantime, I wish to tell you something concerning the critical state of the I.C.L. and of the groups which broke up on the question of the "French Turn".

The backwardness of the country as a whole, its unequal development, and in consequence, the heterogeneity of the proletariat, have caused an extreme weakness of the proletarian movement here.

The Stalinists are even more opportunistic here than elsewhere, because of an anarchistic influence of the petty-bourgeoisie since they started in 1922.

By the time of the revolution of 1930, a left opposition was born in the Communist Party without any clear program or definite principles. This group left the CP and established a section of the ICL joining Trotsky's organization.

The leaders of this group which was organized in Sao Paulo were Fernando (or Berardo) and Apparicio.

This group though quite isolated from the proletarian movement could increase rapidly. In its composition the intellectual petty bourgeoisie predominated. Its paper was the Class Struggle (Luta de Classe).

In the beginning of the year 1934, it entered the proletarian movement. At the time, there were eighty members; one Region in Sao Paulo, another in Rio, and a third one in Ceara.

After the I.C.L. had declared its independence of the C.I., a sort of internal crisis resulted. There were many private divergences between Fernando and Apparicio, each intending to be the Chief of the Organization. Fernando was in favor of the utmost democracy while Apparicio thought the most rigorous centralism necessary. Truly, this struggle was indeed a real expression of the unhealthy condition of the organization, and, in the last analysis, a natural consequence of Trotsky's political line.

The first phase of the internal crisis occurred in Sao Paulo where the C.C. lived. Both the leaders formed their factions and the fight assumed the methods of gangsterism. Never can we describe all the intrigues which took place and constituted a most complex situation.

Finally, by the time an anti-fascist Manifesto was issued, in October 1934, hurriedly promoted by the adventurists of the P.C.B., the fractional struggle culminated. Fernando decided that the organization should not participate, for, it had the help of the Caulista government. Apparicio preached the contrary. The C.C. was dissolved and a new one was established in Rio. This C.C. was a sympathizer of Apparicio and suspended provisionally. The Sao Paulo Region (forty members) broke up and the organization, that for six months did not publish its paper, afterwards fell into complete apathy.

It was at that time that I applied for membership. The atmosphere was unbreathable; everything was in a total paralysis. We received about that time, with considerable delay due to the actual disorder of the organization, the documents about the "French Turn."

The first to write on this subject was I. For certain mysterious reasons the thesis I then wrote, disappeared later on, and I could not keep any copy of this work (one of the methods of the political struggle). On this thesis I stated the following point of view.

1) The Turn was a consequence of the errors of the past, chiefly of the entire isolation of the I.C.L. and of the course of its merely negative activity, which had caused a heterogeneous ideology among its elements.

2) The Turn obviously had to be transformed into an international principle which would affect all the sections directly by their accepting it, or through degeneration of their ideology in consequence of the liquidation of the international organization.

3) The Turn, the theories which have defended it and its consequences had to destroy the I.C.L. It was based upon an erroneous conception of the social-democracy, and certainly was bound to impede the evolution of the social-democratic masses to the left. Justification of the turn as a simple tactic was no more than a way of maneuvering to conciliate the recalcitrant.

One day after the issue of this document, which was signed by Fernando and two other comrades - Josue and Andre - the first read my thesis and immediately adhered to it. We combined to take out a paragraph where I said that even for the French section the adhesion to the Peoples Front was not advisable.

The fraction was founded by 7 militants and had my thesis as a platform. It started a ferocious bureaucratic struggle against us. The atmosphere got worse day by day and the political question became at last a sort of banditism. Apparicio, the leader of the group in favor of the turn, came to Rio in order to direct the maneuvers personally.

The fraction increased rapidly and within a month we had a smashing majority of the elements. The other group was soon reduced to 5 members in all the country; 3 of them were in the C.C.P. which had 5 members. At that time there came to us the Resolution of the Plenum of the I.S. which consecrated the bureaucratic turn.

The fraction called for a National Convention (the IVth) which decided to break with the I.S. and at the same time expel the 5 pro-"Turn" members for their absolutely immoral behavior.

Therefore, there were already certain important differences within the fraction about the French question and about internal organization.

Fernando little by little showed in the fraction his private affairs with Apparicio. The atmosphere became poisoned and all sorts of intrigues circulated everywhere. In the Convention at last the divergences appeared frankly; Fernando insisted on keeping the name of the ICL (Brazilian Section) for our own group; I contested this idea saying this would impede development later on. Fernando won the victory and in some contradiction, we adopted the resolution about the French turn which you know.

I was elected Secretary then; but since the first meetings, the intrigues and divergences have become stronger and stronger. On the basis of these divergences, I insisted on sending a fraction to the Young Workers (Juventude Trabalhista) and pleading for the abandonment of the bureaucratic methods of the administration of the ICL. I asked for the adoption of measures to raise the ideological level and the discipline of all the groups. Fernando systematically opposed all this. In the meantime the 5 pro-"Turn" members organized an independent group and issued a Manifesto and a paper called "Lucta de Classe". The Manifesto was signed by the ICL Secao Brasileira. The situation became chaotic indeed.

In my absence while ill, Fernando prepared a lot of intrigues against me. I abruptly received a letter from the C.C. accusing me of a number of ridiculous deeds. I defended myself, sending them a letter and a written appreciation of the unbearable bureaucracy of the organization.

I asked them to issue this document and spread it amongst all the groups but such was not done and when I came back, I was informed that the C.C. had decided to put me out until the Convention. During this time, I resolved with other militants, to work independently, and our task succeeded, for we could find some connections with some workers and sympathizers.

The line of the other groups evolved more and more into the pro-"Turn" position. I loyally sent them all the material which I was receiving from abroad but they did not want to read and know about it (!). Last September another convention was held here, the Vth, which without consulting the documents I sent, has decided to reconcile itself with comrade Trotsky, join the Committee of Amsterdam and ask the IS to expel the Apparicio group and consider the other as the group ICL - Secao Brasileria.

As for me, I was turned out on the basis of the political divergences presented in the document I sent them and in which I fixed my point of view over the situation.

At present, we have in Brazil, two groups of the ICL; one with Apparicio as the leader and the other with Fernando. Both have the same name, issue a mimeographed paper with the identical title, have the same political situation and mutually exchange insults.

The number of the militants has decreased enormously. I found contact with some comrades who agree with the basis of the new Zimmerwald and I hope we can easily form a Marxist independent group very soon.

With best comradely greetings,
L.

Note: - The above letter is given by us in the original English of the writer, with very few corrections.

Ed.

UNITED STATES:

IN ANSWER TO WEISBORD

(Reply of the ITALIAN LEFT COMMUNIST FRACTION (Bordiga Group)
to article in the "Class Struggle", November, 1935)

In the "Class Struggle" of November 1935, Weisbord, reviewing the discussion that took place between his group and ours, completely falsified our position on the question of trade unions, and on the question of war and the permanent revolution. Concerning the trade unions, we did not exclude the possibility for the revolutionary forces of organizing the American proletariat, but we are against the adventurist manner in which Weisbord pretends to organize them.

We stated and maintained, not that the bureaucracy of the A.F. of L. will change, will become progressive, or anything of the kind, but that they would not be able to stop the struggle of the organized workers against the capitalist class; and in order to make sure of that, it is the duty of all revolutionary forces to be where the masses are.

That does not mean that we shall neglect the great majority of unorganized labor.

On the question of war and fascism Weisbord also misrepresented our view. We did not say that only through the trade union could one fight fascism and

war, but through the class struggle, through the union and outside the union.

Weisbord told us that we need to fight fascism; but did he not also say that if Mussolini wins the war, there would be no more possibility for a revolution in Italy because Italian capitalism would be able to satisfy the masses and inoculate them with fascist culture so that they will forget the experiences of their forefathers and the class struggle? Is that Marxism of the period of wars and revolution? That is why Weisbord posed the struggle against the war of Italian capitalism against Ethiopia as a question of aligning himself with and defending, not the Ethiopian people, but their exploiter Haile Selassie, accepting the help of democratic Franco-England

No, this is not our road or the road of the Ethiopian people or the Italian proletariat. This is the road of maneuvering between the imperialist powers. Our road is the road of class struggle against Italian, French, and English capitalism, and Ethiopian feudalism, for the liberation of the colonial peoples with the help of the proletarian revolution.

On the permanent revolution, Weisbord again distorts our point of view. Yes, we stated that only the proletarian revolution through its dictatorship can solve the national and agrarian questions, and all the needs of the people in the colonial countries. We refuse to accept his anti-Marxist theory that the bourgeoisie could lead or solve the problems of the colonial peoples.

Weisbord put the proletariat in the background, as the tail of the movement, stating as his reason, that it was an insignificant minority.

We are fighting for the only solution for the working class, that is, the violent overthrow of capitalism. Does that mean that we are not fighting for the daily needs of the masses? Only a bureaucrat like Weisbord could state that we are against partial demands, and that we are only for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Weisbord lied when he wrote that we make no distinction between the Franco-German war or the Italo-Ethiopian war. We did state that if he is for the defense of Selassie, why is he not for the defense of the French democracy against German fascism? After all, it is democracy against fascism, and this must be progressive for those like Weisbord who do not understand the process of the class struggle, and the duty of the revolutionist to fight all oppressors, be they democratic or fascist, representatives of capitalism or feudalism.

November 22, 1935

Read **LABOR FRONT**
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REPLY OF THE S.A.P. TO THE DRAFT OF THE "OPEN LETTER"

1. General

The open letter is supposed to reach the broadest possible circles of the working class, but above all the most advanced layers of the world proletariat, to be heard and discussed by them.

The document as it lies before us does not seem to us appropriate for this purpose. The tone in which it speaks, the manner in which it criticizes the old organizations, in our opinion, make it difficult for it to penetrate into these layers.

The criticism is not positive enough in its content. The mistakes of the old organizations are set down very briefly, in part wrongly and inadequately. Almost nothing is said as to what policies are necessary, the necessity of the fourth international is not explained to the worker from the posing of concrete tasks, but the organization form is put to him abstractly. We consider this wrong, for it is not a question of turning to groups who, like all of us, are already convinced of the need for a new communist international, but it is a question of the broader circles of the world proletariat, whom we want first to convince. From the document it does not appear why the old national organizations cannot possibly be reformed, nor does it sufficiently point out the lack of a real international and the necessity of creating one because of the international character of the proletarian struggle.

Important experiences of the class struggle in recent years are not mentioned at all or only inadequately. Nothing is said about problems which have recently arisen, such as state capitalism, and the illegal organizations of the proletariat in Germany, Italy, Austria etc. do not exist for the document.

11. Concrete Proposals for Amendments.

a. To sections 1-7 regarding the parties of the Second International

It is not in accordance with the facts to say that "all the terrible lessons pass by without leaving a trace".

We know that not only in France is the attempt made on many sides, even if often inadequately, to learn from the German defeat, but above all in Spain the lessons of the German defeat made a decisive impression on the Socialist leadership (Caballero - Araquistan etc.) and contributed to the turn in their policy.

What was new and unique in the Spanish development was the fact that the section of the Second International there participated in a leading capacity in the October insurrection and its organization. This was the only case in which "the social-democracy separated itself from the bourgeois state" (Trotsky). Naturally this does not mean that the policy of the S.P. of Spain was correct even in the last months, but it appears today in the eyes of the masses as a revolutionary party. There is no guarantee that the line of development that has been started will be continued, or that the organization will be clarified in a communist sense, but it is completely impossible to say of the leaders of this

party simply that they are "degenerated to the marrow, tied to the bourgeoisie by material interests and patriotic views".

Nor is it possible to say this generally of all the other parties of the Second International. As to the leadership of the S.P. which is located in Austria we know that, contrary to Otto Bauer and Co., it contains many elements which are devoted to the proletariat and revolutionary in their views, even if they are all lacking in experience, maturity, and firmness of principle.

An open letter to the world proletariat must not be silent on the Belgium "plan" movement. This movement has shown that in certain situations enormous masses can be brought into motion even by reformist slogans, large parts of the middle-classes can be won over and neutralized, and that it is even possible in part to bring disruption into the state apparatus. The progressive elements of this movement must be pointed out, and it must be explained that it is impossible to arrive at victory if at the head of its movement there is not a revolutionary party, but reformists who put a brake on the movement for fear of the revolutionary forces which they have themselves released.

Today the situation in Belgium is that a large part, presumably the majority, of the proletariat is supporting the government because it is bringing about a temporary economic improvement, and because, being full of illusions as to the future it has not yet recognized the full depth of the reformist betrayal. Another, smaller, part regards the entry into the government as betrayal of the plan. Only the smallest part is directly opposed, but even it has no clear conception of what to do. In this situation, to speak only of betrayal, without mentioning plan movement, means to turn away themselves from the Belgium workers.

As far as France is concerned, the complete inadequacy of the criticism is obvious to everyone who watches attentively the development that is taking place. It is unquestionable that while on the one hand that Fascists are arming, the policies of the so-called "Peoples Front" have led to a great rise in the anti-Fascist forces. We must show the worker that, gratifying as such a rise may be, these policies will lead to the abyss if they remain purely defensive and not decisively anti-capitalist, not revolutionary, and in addition is preparing for civil peace with the bourgeoisie. One must not be satisfied, instead of explaining this, with the statement, "The S.P. of France continues to hang on 'in vain' to the republican bourgeoisie".

This is just as empty and fruitless as the statement that the S.P. on a world scale shows itself unable even "to mobilize the masses for its own defense". We must show that it mobilizes them wrongly and prove this in an understandable manner.

b. Sections 8-12 regarding the parties of the Third International

The statement made here that the C.P. of Germany "continues to ruin the little authority it has left", that the C.P. in Austria and in Spain showed itself "incapable of building an organization having any influence whatever", that its sections "can no longer come back out of their nothingness", are one and all untrue.

Even if the C.P. did not play a leading role in Spain, still we cannot say that it was completely insignificant; still less is this true of Austria where the C.P. became an influential organization only after the February defeat, and has absorbed many good proletarian elements. In England the C.P. today is as insignificant as it was before, but we have to reckon with the possibility of an upturn as a result of the policy of the Labor Party and as a possible government party. In Sweden and Holland the election figures show a certain upturn. In Belgium an upturn in the party can result from the bitter experiences with the coalition. In Bulgaria and in Yugoslavia the C.P., numerically and in influence, is the strongest proletarian organization. In Czechoslovakia it seems to have overcome its lowest point.

Instead of the statement as to the alleged decline of the C.P. organizations, a criticism with some content must be made of the policies of these organizations. It must be made clear that the growth of votes and parliamentary seats, and even the growth of sympathy among the people (as in France) does not yet prove anything as to the correctness of its policies, that on the contrary the policies of these organizations have nothing in common with communist policies, and therefore must lead the proletariat to the abyss. Here too it is necessary to pay attention to the tone of the criticism, if we set any value upon being heard by communist workers. In this respect it is fatal simply to state that the C.P. of France is "paving the way for fascism". We must show that in spite of the revolutionary will which inspires the communist workers, in spite of the apparently revolutionary mass movement, this movement itself develops on the basis of bourgeois democracy and not of the proletarian revolution, and therefore necessarily must lead to fatal results.

Not only because of the effect on communist (and social-democratic) workers, but also for our own sake, we must say more on the Soviet Union than a few negative and over-sharp sentences. We must show the objective tendencies of development which are striving toward socialism in the U.S.S.R., the dangers which threaten this development from the national and international policies of the bureaucracy, we must point emphatically to our solidarity with these socialist tendencies, and show that the proletarian revolution is necessary in other countries precisely for the sake of the defense of the Russian October. We must show that the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy are endangering the U.S.S.R., but that in reality only our policy can defend the socialist conquests. Instead, the "Open Letter" contains an entirely negative passage, entirely hostile to the U.S.S.R., the entirely un-Marxian characterization of the Stalinist system as "conservative absolutism", and at the close, the monstrous statement, "Nowhere in the world is true Leninism persecuted with such severity as in the U.S.S.R.". To the worker whose manner of thinking is not determined by fractional struggles, this means that Hitler is not as bad as Stalin.

Finally as to the question of the calling of the Seventh Congress, it is entirely possible that it will actually take place. Instead of declaring the opposite, it should be proven that this congress will have purely a theatrical character and possibly also will lead the way to the liquidation of the C.I.

c. To the Sections 13-25 regarding the perspectives.

In section 18 there is a statement that the revolutionary groups in existence today are superior to the "Zimmerwald Left" not only numerically, but also in force and homogeneity. Rather bold. The Zimmerwald Left was forged in the fire of the world conflagration, which seriously tested every organization and every individual. The new organizations have for the most part not yet proven their serious-

ness and above all their homogeneity in major tests. Their alleged homogeneity is based in part on their simultaneous recognition of certain principles. How far such recognition is purely lip-service, is hard to verify. Even the Basle resolution against war could be and was interpreted as homogeneity of the parties of the Second International. Many experiences have shown us that the alleged homogeneity is in reality quite abstract.

Section 20. The struggle against centrism requires not only example, propaganda and criticism, but above all an active and practical policy. It is necessary to be able to show a concrete way out, because only in this way can the masses be convinced of the inadequacy of centrism. Every thought of a 2½ International is to be fought by pointing out the necessity of a revolutionary basis for unity, and moreover by concrete examples and proposals. As to "vague and confused unions" it is necessary to state more definitely what is meant. A new Zimmerwald for example, could also be mistakenly described as such; or any kind of united front. Here too we must point out the necessity of clearing up confusion where it exists by practical proposals and propaganda, and not simply turning away, muttering words of imitation, from existing confused unions insofar as they represent workers organizations. Here we must point to Lenin's anti-sectarian, realistic policies, his acceptance of the Zimmerwald conference, the theses on tactics of the 3rd Congress, and his struggle against the ultra-lefts in his "Infantile Sickness of Communism". It must be made clear that communists can ally themselves with others only when they are in a position to contribute through their work to raising the revolutionary level of the whole. It must be pointed out that this is possible not through abstract propaganda alone, but through concrete collaboration.

In Section 24 the sentence, "A new epoch needs a new International" must be omitted or reformulated. From the fact that we are in a new epoch, we could also conclude according to the same logic that we need a new theory.

In other respects we are in agreement with the content of these sections.

d. Sections 26-28 regarding the war.

Starting from the statement that the slogans for peace etc. "are empty and lying phrases, if they are not accompanied by revolutionary propaganda and the use of revolutionary methods", it is necessary to emphasize the necessity of the struggle for peace. In this struggle it is necessary to utilize the desire of the broad masses of the people for peace to unfold a popular movement which will be directed against capitalism itself. The slogan of peace must therefore be understood as a transition slogan and made the basis of mass actions. Great value should be laid on beginning the broadest united front with all forces that have a real will for peace. In the course of the struggle, insofar as a real mass movement arises, the revolutionists have the possibility and the duty of destroying the pacifist illusions on the basis of the experiences which the masses themselves will have made, letting the movement turn into one for the overthrow of capitalism. It must be pointed out emphatically that abstract slogans "For Peace and the Brotherhood of the People" (appeal of the Bolshevik-Leninists, May 1934, "To the Proletariat of Both Hemispheres") are to be rejected as much as purely platonic declarations against a "coming" war, if these "opponents of war" are not ready today to take part in a movement which is out to mobilize the masses against war through revolutionary policy.

c. Sections 29-33.

Section 29. The Declaration of Four, which contains only some general statements as to the necessity for a new International and its basis, hastily thrown down by a few comrades without discussion in their own organizations, cannot be described as the "Program of the Fourth International". Against the statement "We must build new parties and a new International on a new foundation; that is the key to the solution of all other tasks", we have two objections. First of all, we are not in favor of basing the new International on some kind of "new foundation" not further described, but we want it to be built on the foundations of communism, further developed out of the basic ideas of Marx, Luxemburg and Lenin. Second, this formulation must have the effect of meaning, "We can do nothing before the new International has come into being". We on the contrary think that the new International must arise out of struggle, and that we must therefore unfold this struggle, intervene in it, in order to arrive in this way at the new International. If we have no concrete policies, concrete advice, concrete analyses and continuous close connection with the masses, if we do not lay the main weight on pointing out the "next link in the chain", if we rather put the organizational slogan of the Fourth International, which is necessarily abstract for the masses, exclusively in the foreground, and if we otherwise depend on spontaneity, then we abandon our role as a vanguard and become adorers of the fatalistic historical process.

In Section 31 we consider the statement, "The position of the class enemy is hopeless" as an exaggeration. Even if we do share the view that capitalism is going to its inevitable decline, still, with Lenin, as to the next political stage we are of the opinion that "there is no absolutely hopeless situation for the bourgeoisie". The experiences since that time do not justify us in declaring this (naturally historically limited) view of Lenin as outdated.

In Section 32 the characterization of the development of the Internationals is incorrect. With regard to the Second International it necessarily gives the impression that it was revolutionary in its entirety up to August 4, 1914, and that on that memorable day it was betrayed by a small group of functionaries, while the great mass for some reason or other willingly let itself be betrayed.

In reality the Second International, in the most important countries of Europe, developed in the epoch of rising capitalism, whose reflection in the minds of the masses was reformism. The latter had embraced ever-increasing masses long before August 4, 1914, and driven them on the road to class-collaboration.

It is likewise false to declare that the Third International gave the example of a victorious revolution. It was rather the other way round. The Russian Revolution came before the foundation of the Third International and made it possible altogether.

f. To Sections 34-38 regarding the practical questions.

To this we propose that the organizations which are prepared to sign the Open Letter follow the example of the Dutch R.S.A.P. and affiliate to the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity, in order to work within it to activate its work, for the preparation and commencement of progressive mass actions, for an intensive discussion tying up with our experiences among the separate parties, and thus working together for the new communist International.

In conclusion: We consider the appeal, on the ground of the objections hercin set forth, as unsuitable in its present form. We are prepared to make an elaborated counter-draft for the comrades in a very short time, one which in our opinion would not only be more appropriate in its tone, in the manner of its criticism, etc., to obtain a hearing for the signers of the Open Letter among the best layers of the proletariat, but which would also really represent "a commentary on the Declaration of Four in the light of the experience of the past 1½ years".

HOLLAND:

CRISIS IN THE R.S.A.P. OF HOLLAND

("Neue Front,

December, 1935)

The RSAP held a special national congress on November 16th and 17th, 1935, in Utrecht, which dealt exclusively with the differences which have come up in the party.

Up to now, we have not publicly criticized the developments in the RSAP, since we hoped that this party with which we have friendly relations would have enough inner force of its own to put an end in time to the Trotskyist disruption.

Our expectations, unfortunately, were not fulfilled. The condition in the RSAP today is such that with the help of comrade Schmidt and some other leading elements from the OSP, the Trotskyite influence is making itself at home unhampered, and becoming an acute danger to the party.

In order the better to understand the present conditions in the organization, it is appropriate to glance backward at the accompanying circumstances, the causes and development of the differences.

An Unhappy Fusion

The RSAP, as is well known, 8 months ago, through the fusion of the OSP and the RSP, came into existence. The OSP, with its 3500 members was, on the basis of its historical origin and in accordance with its aims, most intimately connected with the SAP. The RSP numbering some 800 members, had developed from an opposition group in the CP of Holland and based itself in its work on the syndicalist trade unions (NAS) including some 13,000 members. The main functionaries of the RSP are even today, at the same time, paid trade union secretaries in the NAS. Internationally, the RSP was affiliated to the ICL.

The acute situation in Holland, with the Jordan uprising in the summer of 1934, with the Catholic emergency decree government of Colijn, with the constantly growing Nazi danger in the Mussert movement, cries aloud for a revolutionary party. The Dutch SP, ultra-opportunist in its policies, ultra-bureaucratic in its internal regime, is able, in spite of everything, to maintain itself against the Stalinist CP which has gone over from shouting "social-fascism" to opportunistic chasing after the reformists.

Thus the merger into a unified party would have had great possibilities and tasks in Holland.

it is not so important to have large organizations. For the time being, small well-trained cadres are sufficient. If later on sometime, the working class comes into motion, the cadres must then take over the leadership of these masses as officers.

The Tasks of the Opposition

The opposition sees very clearly the dangers which threaten the party through the sectarian position of the party executive. In an objectively written pamphlet by comrade Bladergroen ("Bureaucratic Sectarianism or Revolutionary Democracy?", to be obtained from G. H. DeGroot, Amazonenstraat 54, Amsterdam), the opposition has pointed out the symptoms of sickness in the party and made proposals to bring it back to health. It demands among other things, the withdrawal of the expulsions, inner party democracy, creation of statutes for the organization and a program of action, a clear position on the trade union question, party actions outside the NAS, the trade unions, training of the members and broad discussion on all problems in the party and labor movement, issue of training material, creation of a healthy relation to youth organization.

Internationally, the opposition demands for the future as up to now, close collaboration with the IAG and its utilization as a basis, in order to develop out of it the new International.

According to the attitude of the party executive up to now and the present decisions of the congress, the work of the opposition within the party will be made very difficult, perhaps also (and this will be regrettable), quite impossible. The Trotskyites will continue to centralize according to their views, that is, to give more and more power into the hands of the party executive and on the other side, deprive the members more and more of their rights. On a national scale, the party executive will attach itself even closer to the NAS unions and limit itself to a negative criticism of the CP and SP, but without taking the initiative for an independent policy. The narrow attitude toward the united front will complete its isolation from the masses. On an international scale, the RSAP will lean ever more closely on the ICL and thereby wall itself off from the other independent parties. Presumably, the foundation of the "4th International" will then follow soon.

But all this, in our opinion, should not scare the opposition from making a last effort with all its forces to save the party, with the help of all the sensible elements still left in it from complete destruction by the Trotskyists. A further task for the opposition is to keep together those members who were so light-mindedly expelled by the party executive, so that they may not be lost to the class struggle or perhaps be thrown into indifference.

The opposition in its difficult work must see that what "conquered" at the congress, has shown by its methods, that it is flesh of the flesh of that old labor movement which has either already gone to pieces before our eyes or is inevitably driving to this fate, so that unfortunately there can be no doubt as to the destiny of these "victors".

FRANCE:

DORIOT'S ROAD
(Correspondence)

It is high time to point out in a connected manner the road which Doriot's development has taken and throw a clear light with the help of documents on his latest phase so far. This should permit even the uninitiated to see that Doriot's way has gone further and further away from that of the revolutionary workers' movement, and today runs in almost the opposite direction.

A Hopeful Start

Let us recall briefly the beginning of Doriot's opposition. At the end of 1933, when the Radical Socialist cabinets of Daladier, Chautemps, Sarraut, etc. followed each other at ever shorter intervals, when the fascist organizations appeared for the first time and staged street riots, when, in a word, the "crisis of democracy" had become clear to all, nevertheless the Communist Party, completely failing to realize the situation, calmly continued the policies of the "third period", seeing the French Socialist Party (SFIO) as the main enemy and in its own way supporting the efforts of the reactionaries to drive the radicals out of the government. Doriot, who at that time, was on the Central Committee of the French CP came out sharply against this insane policy and demanded cooperation with the Social Democracy. As was to be expected, he did not gain his point and was simply "put on ice". Then came the events of February 6th and 7th - completely surprising the CP. But even after that, the sectarian line was not abandoned, although the united front wave, the desire to offer resistance in a united front to the wishes of the reaction for a coup d'etat swept over the working masses of the whole country. Everywhere, spontaneous united front committees arose, but the CP, after the German example, broke and smashed them. They were able to maintain themselves only in a few of the small communities, above all, in the Parisian workers' suburb of St. Denis, where Doriot has been mayor and as such chairman of the red municipal administration since 1929. Contrary to instructions from the center, Doriot remained on this united front committee together with representatives of the SFIO even after the general strike of February 12th and his behavior was approved by the overwhelming majority of the workers of St. Denis who were largely organized in the CP. This was shown at the new elections for the municipal administration. By a demonstrative and voluntary resignation from all posts, Doriot and his adherents wanted to subject their opposition policies to a plebiscite of the inhabitants of St. Denis. They were re-elected by an unusually high majority. Doriot was then ordered to go to Moscow; when he refused, he was finally expelled from the party and the CI in June, 1934.

At the beginning, his opposition was limited almost exclusively to the question of the united front on a national scale. He did not open up for discussion, the international questions in the communist movement. He undertook propaganda tours throughout the country and succeeded in creating united front committees in a few places. The creation of the united front between both parties at the end of July, 1934, confirmed the correctness of the opposition's attitude, but at the same time also paralyzed the momentum of his movement. If his criticism of the CP was nevertheless to become the starting point for a revolutionary tendency, in face of the general enthusiasm for the united front which was finally being realized, it would have had to go much deeper, and at the same time, he would have had to show a road for the revolutionary way out of the present situation in France. He failed to do either of these things, but limited himself to attacking and ex-

posing the bureaucratic methods (orders from Moscow!) and the destruction of party democracy, all in the most superficial manner. As to internal policy, at the end of 1934, there came from St. Denis, the slogan, "One class, one party, one union". As to foreign policy, his position had long been unclear. In any event, from the very beginning, it was extremely pacifist.

As the connection of French imperialism to the Soviet Union grew closer in the course of developments, Doriot's line in foreign policy crystallized into the slogan, "we must negotiate with Hitler" (in order to maintain peace). Then came the actual conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact and the famous Stalin-Laval communique. Doriot raised a storm against it, on pacifist, not on revolutionary grounds: "we refuse to march again, not even for the sake of the Soviets!". "The People's Front", he declared, "was made in order to prepare for the coming war against Germany".

It was only natural that such words were hungrily snapped up by the German fascist press, and still continues to be. For example, in the Berliner Boersen-Zeitung of July 11, 1935, under the headline, "The People's Front as a Cover for Moscow's Foreign Policy", we find the following sentences quoted from Doriot: "The foreign policy of Soviet Russia plays a great role in the movement of the united left front. For the Communists, the 'People's Front' is not only a simple anti-fascist movement but also a means of moving the masses to support the foreign policies of Soviet Russia. It is a means of systematically supporting Soviet Russia against Germany, and of stopping a peaceful rapprochement between France and Germany such as the French masses hoped for. The People's Front is not only a means of eliminating fascism at home, but of preparing the working class and the whole country for an eventual war. Therefore, the People's Front which is led by the Communists, is especially dangerous".

If this position on foreign policy was already disquieting, his orientation on internal policy seems to be taking an absolutely counter-revolutionary direction. In a previous letter, we passed along the report which was carried by the satirical weekly, "Canard Enchaîné", which is always well informed - the prospective creation of a so-called "third party" (with tendencies to authoritarianism, national planning, and a corporated system), whose leading staff is to be composed of the "Volontaire Nationaux" who recently resigned from the Croix de Feu, such as Maudhuy, La Roche, etc. of the Left Radicals, Jacques Kayser, Jean Zay, of the journalists, Pierre Dominique and Bertrand de Jouvenel, of Bergery - and of Doriot. In two articles in the weekly "Europe Nouvelle", which maintains relations with these circles and - with Laval, the above mentioned Bertrand de Jouvenel threw open this question for discussion. In the issue of July 20, 1935, he observes that for years in France, the "resignation" of young disappointed leaders from all kinds of parties and groups continues without interruption; Bergery resigned from the Radical Socialist Party, Deat from the SFIO, Doriot from the CP, Maudhuy from the Croix de Feu, Roger de Saivre from the Jeunesse Patriote, etc. etc. They all want "something new", i. e. some kind of "planned economy" in which there will no longer be the "special interests" of some 200 capitalists (it is not clear even to themselves exactly what they want). Neither capitalism nor socialism. But all the efforts to create this "something new" have failed up to now. For the masses have remained with the old parties and groups, and those leaders who have resigned, fearing to be considered renegades, have almost always laid aside their former ideology only timidly, piece by piece. But how would it be if all these "resigners" were to unite, i. e. Berger, y-Doriot on one side, Maudhuy-Saivre on the other, and Deat as a "hyphen"? Would they be able to build a "national union" with the aim of "regenerating the nation", a movement to unite the lefts and rights of French society on a higher level for the benefit of the entire nation?

In a second article ("Europe Nouvelle" of August 10, 1935) Bertrand de Jouvenel goes further into this question and examines the obstacles to such a "new movement" ("third force"). According to his opinion, there are three factors: the personalities, the material resources, the ideologies. It will be very difficult, he explains, for example, to make the "anti-militarist" Bergery acceptable to the nationalist youth. It would be very difficult to obtain the necessary money for propaganda etc. And third, so far, the ideology which all these scattered "oppositionists" have in common is extremely fragmentary. All of them are orientated against parliamentarism and against capitalism, but each of them conceives of this in a different way. At the close he puts the question, "Is this synthesis easy?" and he answers, "No, Is it possible? Yes!"

The objection can be raised that these articles express only the more or less personal views of De Jouvenel, without anything of the sort actually being undertaken. But in that case, those who refuse to have anything to do with such "combinations" would have to separate themselves with the fullest publicity from such rumors. Nothing has been heard from Doriot to this effect. On the contrary, it has transpired that he has been negotiating with one of the resigned leaders of the Croix de Feu (Maudhuy). Here it is of no importance whether the above mentioned combination ever comes to pass or not. (It seems to be already out of date, since the split from the Croix de Feu have just joined with the Young "Planistes" from the Neo-Socialistes, the group of the "Hommes Nouveaux" to form a "National Workers Party", the Parti Travailleurs Francaises).

But there is a much more weighty piece of evidence as to the connection of Doriot with these circles: an interview which he gave to Pierre Dominique, and which appeared in the "Discussion Supplement - Revolution? When? By Whom?" of the right wing radical daily paper "La Republique" of August 3rd, 1935. On the same page, we find the answer of one of the resigned Croix de Feu leaders, and the answer of Jean Renaud, the "Leader" of the fascist League "Solidarite Francaise". This interview of Doriot's, whose importance cannot be overestimated, had a very interesting later history of which we will speak later. Below we bring the full text, omitting the journalistic embellishments about Doriot's appearance, posture, etc.:

"I BELONG TO THE PEOPLE'S FRONT...." 'Did they really think', he said, 'that I would not march along too on July 14th?' 'They' - that means the Communists. And Doriot added, 'Naturally, they threw mud at me.' 'Doriot, the renegade! very good.' And Daladier lets it go on. What is the People's Front altogether? Then they do not want all Frenchmen in it?.... No. They want to keep out this one or that. Family quarrels. Let us better talk frankly. Why didn't they want me? Why did they slander me? Because I did not agree with the Russians, isn't that so? Because I did not want to bow before them, because I did not want to obey their commands, because the People's Front (among ourselves, and for your readers too) was born where? In Moscow. I could say that they put it on its feet, they tried to capture its leadership and hold on to it. Because the People's Front has always existed as a gathering of men on the basis of certain ideas, or at least long before they injected themselves into it in order to revive it. And therefore I consider myself a member of the People's Front if I may say so, from birth and tradition, and for that reason, I am in it and want to stay in it precisely in order to eliminate the Russian influence. (Continued next page)

"THE TWO OPPONENTS. 'Do you think that I will ever isolate and separate myself from the people? No! But I will not let them deceive this people. You know who its enemies are: on the one hand, the Soviets, on the other, capital! I wanted to be safe from both of these tyrannies.'

"Doriot bends over a little closer to me. 'Capital, the Soviets, and their friends, the one as well as the other want to prevent us from carrying through the national regeneration, by forcing us to adopt the purely critical position But first look at what the People's Front actually means at bottom, or at least what it was before it was captured by leaders who surely did not deserve such soldiers. The People's Front - that is at bottom the flight of all that is young away from what is old; that is the discovery of the Nation by individual communists; that is perhaps, or could be, the return of the radicals to the great mass of the people. The People's Front which the Soviets are trying to lead through the instrument of the Communist Party is insofar as it is independent, the struggle of the independents of all the left parties to avoid the constant censorship and tyranny of the general staffs. Yes! If it were led honestly by Frenchmen and in a national sense.... Who knows? Perhaps it harbors within itself the regeneration of the country.'

"THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT. 'Then', I said, 'it seems to you that the People's Front has a great future.' 'That is', murmured Doriot, 'if it were properly handled. What is the finest bloc in the world worth if it is not based upon a program? Yes, we have the Plan of the CGT, I know. Good, let us accept it. But we must start something. To carry on anti-La Rocque business is very clever but it is no program. To sing by turns the Marseillaise and the Internationale? Also not. La Rocque does not need to have a program, but we?' 'Perhaps', I said, 'if a Leader should arise.....'

"Doriot makes a grimace. 'No, that would not be enough, and it would fail. And then, what Leader? From which camp? In point of fact, the People's Front is made up of three parts: the radical, the socialists, the communists. As to party discipline, there is none among the radicals, little among the socialists, a great deal among the communists - and therefore, the communists play the part of a sort of fraction. Only.... who guarantees that they will be followed to the very end? How can one follow a party which is incapable of creating its own doctrine, which imports it fresh from abroad, which smashes everything personal, which acts only on orders from Moscow?' 'Nevertheless', I objected, 'Moscow has done at least this much good, that it has driven them to recognize the idea of the fatherland.' 'Yes', answered Doriot, 'but if tomorrow Moscow's interests should coincide with the necessity of defeatism among us? The interests of France, the most central interests of this people, you see, are for peace. And since Germany is our only possible opponent, peace with Germany. With no matter what Germany, do you understand? Only that does not suit the Soviet Union, and that is why...' 'He smiled; 'Have you noticed how pacifistic the Russians used to be? The fact is they had no arms. Now that they possess arms, they are less pacifistic, aren't they? Among them, the propaganda for disarmament was a tradition. Suddenly, they broke with this tradition'. 'That is true', I replied, 'but let us not forget that Stalin is going full steam ahead along the road which we may call national communism.'

"MEMORIES OF THE RUHR OCCUPATION. 'Notice this', said Doriot, 'Remember that at the time of the Ruhr occupation German communism was national through and through. I remember a speech of Radek in honor of Schlageter, that ultra-right German whom our occupation troops shot down because of terrorism. Radek called him the 'Knight of Nothingness', and celebrated him even though he was surprised

not to see him among the communists. Perhaps that will allow you to understand better Vaillant-Couturier's article, his appeal to the resigned Croix de Feu (Volontaire Nationaux). Wasn't the alpha and omega of the German Communist Party the struggle against the Treaty of Versailles? The German and the Russian communists agreed to support the treaty of Rapallo and the Russo-German alliance. The last great program of the German Communists was based on reaching 'national and social liberation'. Hitler said nothing different. To shake off the Treaty of Versailles, to proclaim the right of self-determination of the peoples and therefore struggle for the 'Anschluss' (with Austria). Undoubtedly the German Communists fought hard against Hitler, but in actual fact it was a competition between them and the Hitler people for power on a national scale. I mention this in order to emphasize the fact that there is nothing new in the present maneuver of the Soviets. What the Soviets did formerly with Germany, they are now doing with France, and are driving the French Communists to carry on the same old policies of the German Communists. The game, besides, is carried on on a personal basis and in a most unashamed manner....' Doriot looks at me and concludes, 'once the Radical Socialist Party wants to negotiate with Hitler, the whole splendor will fall to pieces.'

And then follow the remarks of the interviewer, Pierre Dominique:

"A NEW FORMULA AND A NEW MAN. Thus Doriot has exposed the maneuver which will undoubtedly be attempted by Laval and will be connected with Leon Blum's maneuver to create a Labor Party on a more limited terrain than the People's Front. Now he is abandoning these Russians, who are brutally persecuting him in retribution, and we speak of the necessity of finding a new formula which at one and the same time includes concern for the country and concern for the enormous mass of workers.

"I have only been able to summarize here a long discussion with this fighter, this man who is most sharply attacked by the Communists, but who remains himself, with the people in his heart, retains his post as mayor of St. Denis with his faithful, and remains one of the surest reserves of the great revolutionary and national movement of tomorrow. He has seen more clearly than anyone else, even more than Moscow. That has made him appear a heretic, but it has made him free. Today he is beginning to take advantage of this freedom of thought and action in order to give a national character to the revolution which he has long carried within himself. The fact that the communists greet the fatherland and its flag, and thereby steal his ideas, have put him somewhat in the shadow, but he is patient and calm, he waits without forcing himself into the foreground but without ever evading responsibility. No one knows when the hour will strike; the main thing is to await it and to seize it. Pierre Dominique"

We can spare comment on this interview. It speaks for itself. One can imagine that its content has made even the last "true believer" at least careful in estimating the development of Doriot. After the interview appeared, there was great confusion among the independent revolutionary forces in Paris. For it was precisely under Doriot's protectorate that the anti-war and anti-civil peace conference of St. Denis took place on August 10 and 11. At a preparatory session, therefore, several comrades, pointing to the newspaper with Doriot's interview, declared that they would now have to change the meeting place, since one could not go to St. Denis to an "agent of Laval". The representative of Doriot then present, simply denied the interview from top to bottom in the most determined way. Doriot himself, is supposed to have done the same verbally. But so far, there has been no denial in writing. At the St. Denis anti-civil peace conference itself, at which Doriot did not personally take part, the matter came up on the floor again.

Here it was his closest collaborator, Barbe, who defended his master from the speaker's platform. There is only one written report on it, that of the "Revolution Proletarienne", whose author however is supposed to be friendly to Doriot, so that caution is required. Moreover, the very fact of the small place which this event is given in the conference report of the "R.P." (in contrast with the "Valois case" for instance), shows how the objectivity of its author stands. It says:

"....Barbe denied the text of the "Republique" interview, which, he said, reproduced neither the sense nor the form of Doriot's thoughts. On the other hand, it is true that the resigned members of the Croix de Feu had asked for a discussion with the comrades of St. Denis. They were received like all those who apply to St. Denis for advice. But nothing else happened or is happening. You who want to struggle against war', continued Barbe, 'must be prepared for all kinds of slanders and insults such as those which we are receiving now. You must know that we assume responsibility only for our own actions and written documents."

As can be easily seen, the decisive points were evaded. Barbe did not even try to deny the fact of the interview.

We have used above in connection with Doriot the description, "agent of Laval". And in fact this is a further "complication" which makes the development of Doriot appear so fatal. Besides, one ought to know that Laval is the Mayor of the northern Parisian workers' suburb, Aubervilliers, which adjoins Doriot's community, St. Denis. The very proximity of the two mayors is of a nature to tie them closer together.Their line on foreign policy must also be considered, which coincides on more than one point, and above all on the decisive point, antipathy against the Soviets.

Yes, one may ask, but cannot this assumption be proved by the statements, speeches and articles of Doriot? For a leader of a community with a relatively very class-conscious worker population like St. Denis, it is naturally impossible to take the part openly of a prime minister under whose government severe measures against the working class (emergency decrees, etc.) are on the order of the day. But whoever understands how to interpret things will quickly discover an element of support even in Doriot's attacks on Laval, strange as that may seem at first sight. We quote below a few sentences from a speech which Doriot held on July 24, 1935 in St. Denis:

"Today the Communists are storming against Laval's emergency decrees, and we too, are opposed to them. We all are right ... But nevertheless the deflation policy is not Laval's alone, but also that of Herriot and Frossard....". Or

"...If you (the CPF) shout every day in the Humanite that the government has issued shameless emergency decrees, still you are incapable of carrying on your action within the left delegation and against the entire government; you limit your attacks to a single minister although they are all in solidarity with each other." Finally,

"....In order to make myself understood, I might say that we must concentrate our fire against the entire government, but that our criticism and our condemnation must be more forceful in regard to those who reach us their hand and stab us in the back (i.e., the radicals)."

It will have to be admitted that these words, which taken alone, represent a thoroughly correct policy, acquire a very doubtful aftertaste in view of the background mentioned above.

.....In the issue of September 14 of his paper, "Emancipation", Doriot wrote a truly unprecedented article headed "The 'Independence' of the Communist Party". In this, he discusses the most recent decision on this point of the Seventh World Congress and proves (what we all know) that in reality nothing will be changed. The article does not attack the problem from the Leninist standpoint, but puts the question from the point of view (we must say - bourgeois one) of "Free from Moscow". That this must lead to sentences and "exposures" which bring water to the mill of the counter-revolution in general, can be seen from the fact alone that the rabidly reactionary-clerical "Echo de Paris" of September 18 brings with great display some excerpts from this article of Doriot's. To give an idea of the spirit which permeates this article, we bring the seven questions which Doriot asks in it of the CPF:

"1. Has Comrade Gachin, now the independent director of L'Humanite, brought back from Moscow the majority of the stock of L'Humanite which was handed over to Comrade Piatnitsky some years ago?

"2. Has Comrade Thorez, the general master of the party apparatus, given up for this year and for the future, the subsidies from the Comintern which are indispensable for the functioning of the party and the paper?

"3. Have the delegates of the CPF in Moscow demanded that the ECCI stop sending telegraphic and telephonic orders and stop the censorship of the decisions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee?

"4. Have the delegates demanded the right to consult with full independence, i.e., without the presence of international representatives, bearers of directives and orders, who are constantly intriguing to force them on the delegates?

"5. Will the party apparatus be freed from the presence of the famous international instructors, who, without fixed responsibility, direct the whole party apparatus without consulting it?"

Questions 6 and 7 deal with the election of party functionaries by the Comintern and the C.C. without the collaboration of the members, and with the tactical zigzags on the basis of decisions of the ECCI, likewise without consulting the members. "Has that too been changed now?", asks Doriot.

If one wanted to give material against the communist movement into the hands of the reaction, he could not do it better than Doriot with this article. Was it on purpose or not?

We leave the decision on this to the reader. We, however, think that, from a hope of the communist movement, Doriot has become an enemy of the communist movement.

Read

WORKERS VOICE

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A COPY

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A YEAR

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MOVEMENT

1. International Youth Bulletin, August, 1935.

Meeting of the Secretariat of the International Youth Bureau of
August 18th, 1935.

Point 2 on Agenda: The Bureau and the Internationalist-Communist League (ICL).

The representative of the ICL at this point on the agenda presented the standpoint of his organization on the 4th International. He said that his friends had considered the Bureau from the very beginning as an auxiliary for the new Youth International within the framework of the 4th International. It was necessary to reorganize the Bureau on the basis of the ICL. The acceptance of the 4th International was to be the criterion. The condition for the Youth Section of the ICL remaining in the Bureau was the clear acceptance of the 4th International and the enlargement of the Secretariat by one representative each of the French ICL Youth organization and of the Dutch League, with the headquarters in Paris.

It was pointed out by the other comrades that the ICL had for a considerable time already openly regarded itself as standing outside of the Bureau, and in any case, is working in this direction. After the Paris conference, the representative of the Bureau was accused of "betrayal", the Paris action committee was split, etc. The articles of the ICL leadership about the Bureau were articles against the Bureau, such as the long article against the SAP in "Unser Wort" and other publications which contain statements contrary to fact about the Bureau. Trotsky's message to the Socialist Youth International Congress in Copenhagen was two-thirds directed against the SAP. The "ICL Youth Information" carried untrue statements about affiliated Leagues and the direction of its polemics was against the Bureau. It was particularly pointed out that the dispute was not on the question, whether a new International is necessary. But the question is, whether the Bureau should become a tool of the Trotskyite "International Secretariat", or whether it should proceed seriously on the basis of the Lille resolution to the work of gathering and clarifying the revolutionary working class youth. The disputed questions must be clarified at the next meeting of the Bureau. Until then, the interests of the Bureau require a Secretariat capable of functioning. It was therefore proposed to the representative of the ICL to stop the destructive attacks and declare himself prepared for comradely collaboration. This, however, was refused by the comrade from the ICL. Thereupon, the representatives in the Secretariat of the Socialist Youth Leagues of Sweden and Germany (SJY) gave out the following statement:

"The representatives of the Socialist Youth Leagues of Sweden and Germany note that Comrade Held as member of the Secretariat of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Youth Organizations at the session of the Secretariat of August 18th, 1935, a) expressly refused to cease the attacks of the ICL on the Youth Bureau and the work of the existing ICL Secretariat against the Bureau, b) specifically stated he was not prepared to collaborate loyally on the basis of the Lille Conference with the SJY of Sweden and the SJY of Germany until the next session of the Bureau.

"The representatives of the SJY of Sweden and the SJY of Germany, therefore, find themselves compelled, in the interests of the positive continuation of the work of the Bureau and of the responsible preparation of the next Bureau session to carry out the work of the Secretariat until that time

without Comrade Held. They will likewise propose to the Revolutionary Socialist Youth League (RSJV) of Holland, in accordance with the wish of the Swedish and German Leagues, that it be co-opted into the Secretariat. The affiliated Leagues will be informed after the answer of the Dutch comrades as to how the practical work of the Secretariat will be carried out in the future.

(sig.) Willy Brandt

(sig.) Kurt Forslund"

2. International Youth Bulletin, Vol. 2 No. 7, October, 1935, page 17

THE SPECIAL CONGRESS OF THE RSJV OF HOLLAND

The ICL Minority Quits the League.

At the Lille conference, both the Socialist Youth League and the Revolutionary Youth League of Holland joined the International Bureau of Revolutionary Youth organizations. The two Leagues had two entirely different courses of development behind them: the SJV arose in 1932 out of the Opposition of the Social-Democratic Youth and therefore was built up politically. The RJV was the Youth Organization of the Syndicalist Union (NAS) and therefore came along with the RSP into close contact with the ICL. Even before the Lille conference negotiations for collaboration between the Leagues had taken place, but were broken off and the relations between them were aggravated again. The International Youth Bureau always emphasized the necessity of creating a unified, independent youth organization in Holland. After the negotiations for merger of the two parties led to a positive result, the question of unification of the youth entered into a new stage. The two leaderships arrived at complete agreement as to the course of the unification, and as to the program and tasks of the organization. On March 24th, 1935, the Revolutionary Socialist Youth League (RSJV) of Holland was founded with some 600 members. The RSJV affiliated itself to the International Youth Bureau, and the Lille resolution was its political basis.

Shortly after the unification, however, it appeared that within the organization, there were far reaching differences of opinion. The greater part of these concerned the international questions, particularly the relationship of the ICL to the International Youth Bureau and to its affiliated Leagues. The former functionaries of the RJV stood entirely on the standpoint of the International Secretariat of the ICL. On October 12th and 13th, a special Congress was called to decide the disputed questions. Previously, the differences were discussed throughout the entire organization.

The Special Congress in Amsterdam took a course which was by no means gratifying for the revolutionary youth movement. Its result was a new split, the adherents of the ICL leaving the hall on the second day of the Congress and constituting themselves as the "Leninist Young Guard", affiliated with the ICL. The following, briefly, was the course of the Congress: arrangements had been made for two political reports from both tendencies, with a discussion period. However, organizational questions took up the whole first day and part of the second day. Then came a motion to take up, at last, the political report. The ICL fraction, however, demanded that first of all, the proposal be taken up for the expulsion of the leadership because of their harmful attitude to the organization. The first motion, however, was passed by fourteen votes against seven. Thereupon, the ICL minority left the Congress. It refused to discuss the questions for the sake of which the Congress had been called.

Comrade Jan Molenaar then gave his report and sharply condemned the attitude of the opponents who had caused a new split by their actions. He demanded that the old foundation be restored to the organization. Next spoke Jan Koomen, editor of the "Rood Jeugd". He emphasized particularly that collaboration with the RSAP would be maintained even if the majority of the party executive should declare itself in solidarity with the ICL.

On the question of the youth International, the comrades then decided, "that only when complete agreement on all principle questions and the important tactical ones exists, can great confidence, comradeship, solidarity and discipline prevail among the revolutionary youth organizations; that the new Revolutionary Youth International can arise only out of and through practical international collaboration and joint concrete actions, experiences and lessons. The Congress recognizes that there is as yet no possibility of passing over in the action for the new Youth International, from the stage of preparation and propaganda into that of practical organization. It decides upon the greatest possible cooperation in the activities and the work of the International Youth Bureau, in order that the pre-conditions for setting up the new Youth International shall be created as quickly as possible.

From the other decisions on the international questions, we point out the following:

For the next Bureau meeting, the Congress proposes the anti-war resolution of the Paris conference in February, 1935, with an addition on youth and the war, as the basis of the Bureau on the war question. Further, it supported the decision of the Secretariat to work in collaboration with the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity for the gathering of the forces "against war and civil peace, for revolutionary action," and for an International Conference of the opponents of civil peace. The attacks of the ICL on the Bureau and the Secretariat were rejected and the decisions of the Secretariat's session in August, upheld.

In a special decision, the political and organizational independence of the RSJV was emphasized but it was proposed to work in close collaboration with the RSAP. The intervention of the Party into the internal questions of the Youth and vice-versa were rejected. The functionaries of the ICL fraction in the previous national leadership were expelled from the League. It was decided to set up a solidarity fund of the RSJV and to proceed as soon as possible with issuing the League organ.

Comrade Molenaar, chairman of the RSJV, closed the Congress, pointing to the threatening danger of war. He said that Holland, too, could not be neutral in the coming world war and proved it by the efforts of Japan to acquire naval bases in the Dutch colonies. "The political foundation of the RSJV," he said, "is correct and must be retained. The RSJV must continue to fulfill its duties, must proceed to carry out its tasks more actively and energetically, and draw the lessons out of the events which had just happened."

PROPERTIES OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

by B. J. FIELD

15¢

SECTARIANISM, CENTRISM AND TROTSKY

(STATEMENT BY NATIONAL BUREAU OF LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY
WORKERS PARTY)

The crisis of the revolutionary movement of the past twelve years is reflected in the crisis of the revolutionary groupings and also of individuals. The position of Trotsky in the present situation is therefore closely tied up with the general prospects of the movement for a new International. The needs of the present period place the building of a new international revolutionary party in the foreground. The principled and practical problems of how to build a revolutionary organization acquire an unprecedented importance.

Yet it is precisely in these tasks that Trotsky in the past has failed the movement. We have previously pointed out the contradictions between his political theory and his organizational practice, between the formulation of the theory of permanent revolution in 1905 and his organizational relations with the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the whole period from 1903 to 1917, between his formulation of the criticism of Stalinism in the period 1923 to 1928 and his helplessness in the strategy of that struggle; between the formulations of the principles of the International Left Opposition and the absolute failure to build an organization under the slogan of "Reform the Comintern".

But since 1933, Trotsky and the Internationalist-Communist League (ICL), cutting adrift from the sinking hulk of the CI, had to stand or fall, not on the basis of theoretical formulations but on the tasks which they had set themselves, building a new International. During this period, the disparity between the high level of theory and the low level of organizational practice has been narrowed -- by reducing theory to the level of practice. Organizationally, this period has been marked by a series of zigzags in no way corresponding to the objective historical development: the new International was supposed to be built, first on the principles of the Internationalist-Communist League alone (Militant, Sept. 30, 1933); then on the basis of a bloc of four groups ("Declaration of Four"), by "winning over" centrist elements in other groups (OSP, SAP); next, by breaking with any centrist organizations (those in the IAG, growing antagonism to the SAP), while jumping into the parties of the Second International, first of all in France, on the basis of national peculiarities and quickly broadening this out into an international line except for further national peculiarities in Holland and USA; again based on imminent expulsion from the French Socialist Party, a sharp zigzag back to the policy of building the new International around the ICL ("Open Letter of Five"), building an independent party in France, without fighting for reinstatement in the Socialist Party. All these turns were executed in the space of two years. Not one of these turns was made on the basis of open discussion by elected delegates in an international conference -- there never was such an international conference; every one of these turns was imposed from above by Trotsky. The organizational practice is absolutely on a par with that of Stalinism. During that whole period as well as in the preceding life of the ILO, uninterrupted splits occurred which are still continuing. Along with the disintegration, has come a steady decline in mass influence and in membership and the loss to the ICL of the Spanish, German, Greek and other sections. On the whole, a retrogressive tendency back to the pure propaganda circle has set in, while a steady stream of ballyhoo and exaggeration has been maintained, in order to cover up defeats.

Distorting Theory to Fit Practice

The degeneration in theory has come from the forcible attempt to adjust principles to these organizational zigzags. With the opportunist swing toward the Socialist Parties, came the abandonment of the slogan of Soviets in France, the acceptance of a workers' and peasants' government (Blum-Cachin), constituent assembly and organic unity between CP and SP "if on a revolutionary program" (exactly the position of the Left Socialists in the USA), and the monstrous assertion that "the mere fact that a comrade does not accept the dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean that he cannot be in the same party with us - he will learn from experience" (Verite, Oct. 18, 1933). In Trotsky's latest article, "Sectarianism, Centrism and the 4th International" (New Militant, Jan. 4, 1936), the Belgian Socialist Party (POB), the extreme right wing of the 2nd International, is defined as follows, "In Belgium the trade unions are fused with the Party, the Belgian Party is essentially the organized working class". If this is true at all, it was as true in 1919 as it is today, and as it will be no matter how sharp the conflict becomes between revolutionists and reformists within the POB. If to split with the POB means to split with the working class, revolutionists must never split with the POB under any circumstances and permanent capitulation to the reformist leadership is not only sanctioned in advance but elevated to the level of principle.

But this estimation of the POB is only incidental to Trotsky's article. It is supposed to deal primarily with the defense of Marxism (here identified with Trotsky's "general line") against sectarianism and centrism. The article opens promisingly enough. Its very first sentence is, "It would be absurd to deny the presence of sectarian tendencies in our midst." Healthy self-criticism on the face of it. A little further down, we are told that, "To a superficial mind, it may seem that such words as sectarian, centrists, etc. are merely polemical expressions exchanged by opponents for lack of other and more appropriate epithets. Yet the concept of sectarianism as well as the concept of centrism has a precise meaning in a Marxist dictionary."

Yet we are doomed to disappointment on both counts. Before we are through with the article, we are told that, "the organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists, after purging itself of sectarian and centrist tendencies, not only grew numerically but etc." And the last sentence tells us, that "only that organization will be able to survive and develop which has not only cleansed its ranks of sectarianism, but etc." The organization in question is not named, but surely it is fair to suppose that the author had in mind none other than the ICL. In other words, after writing a long article, Trotsky is back where he started from.

But What Is Sectarianism?

Nor do we fare any better in the effort to find out what sectarianism is, especially after we are told that it has a "precise meaning in the Marxist dictionary". It appears from the article that the sectarian creates a correct program but does not take steps to have the working class accept it; "active intervention into the actual struggle of the workers masses is supplanted for them by an abstract propaganda of a Marxist program". We are also told that, "he who is unable to step in time over the confines of this circumscribed existence (of a Marxist circle - ed.bd.) becomes transformed into a conservative sectarian. The sectarian looks upon the life of society as a great school.... The sectarian is the direct negation of dialectic materialism.... does not understand the dialectic action and reaction.... lives in a sphere of ready made formulas.... to the sectarian, discussion is a goal in itself... for analysis of reality, the sectarian substitutes intrigue, gossip and hysteria."

These items of description may have all the vividness which is gained from personal experience, but they do not add up to make a Marxist definition with a "precise meaning". They certainly do not apply to the policy of the Communist Party during the Third Period which the ILO and Trotsky consistently (and correctly) characterized as sectarian. It is not enough to be told that the sectarian is like a man who satisfies his thirst with salt water; the more he drinks the thirstier he becomes; or that the centrist swims with the current while the sectarian "generally does not want to go swimming at all in order not to wet his principles".

What we need is not some watery similes, but something more solid in the form of a discussion of the fundamentals of revolutionary policy in the present period. It was precisely to supply some material for such discussion that we reprinted the SAP pamphlet on "Revolutionary Policy" in Vol. 1 No. 2 of this Bulletin as a basis for a criticism of the SAP as well as of Trotsky.

As we see it, revolutionary policy is concerned with finding the shortest and surest road from that which is (the objective and subjective conditions of the class struggle under capitalism) to that which must be (the overthrow of capitalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the classless society). The problem can be solved only with reference to both sides, the immediate struggle and the ultimate goal. The break with Marxism consists in losing one or the other; the sectarian, concerned with the ultimate objectives alone, loses sight of the next immediate link in revolutionary policy. The opportunist, concerned with the most immediate problems alone, has no revolutionary outlook or perspective. If one may use a simile to illustrate and not to take the place of definition, the sectarian may fall into a ditch because he has his eyes fixed on to the horizon, the opportunist bangs his head into a wall because he has his eyes fixed on to the ground. The revolutionist has what scientists describe as not too common a phenomenon, i. e., normal eyesight, constantly adjusting its focus to the changing road of the objective historical development, and not to his subjective deficiencies in eyesight.

Sectarianism, therefore, is isolation from the real movement of the masses by getting too far ahead of it; opportunism is drowning revolutionary policy in the real movement of the masses and therefore trailing behind it. Both are one-sided and neither is concerned with the specific problem of revolutionary policy which is to devise, on the basis of permanent principles, those tactics which will bring the movement forward from the immediate situation to the next step ahead toward the revolutionary goal.

The polar opposite of sectarianism then, is opportunism, and it is to opportunism, not centrism, to which the desperate sectarian resorts.

Sectarianism and opportunism are definite political lines, one concerned with the ultimate goal alone and adopting policies that have no relation to the immediate class struggle, the other concerned with the immediate struggle alone and adopting policies which do not lead to the revolution which is the goal of the proletariat.

Revolutionary policy adopts those policies which lead most directly from the immediate struggle to the ultimate goal.

Dangers of Centrism

Centrism, on the other hand, does not describe a clearly defined political line but is a general name for a whole broad range of political tendencies which have in common, the effort to obtain revolutionary aims with opportunistic means. In trying to find a middle ground for conciliation among the conflicting tendencies, objectively and historically, the centrist tendencies swing far more readily to the opportunist than to the revolutionary side, and therein lies their special danger. The immediate means tend to overshadow the ultimate goal. Particularly has this been the experience in the past period of crisis in the revolutionary movement. During the upswing from 1917 to 1922, however, the experience was the other way around.

"Centrism" does not define a political tendency but characterizes it, and the specific characteristics of this or that separate group are given by the objective situation in which it finds itself and the particular political tendencies, opportunist or sectarian, or revolutionary, among which it is trying to maneuver. Centrism in the question of building a new party is expressed in refusal to break with opportunists and unite with revolutionists.

In the past history of the Trotsky group in America (CLA, now WP), the internal struggle turned on the question of a revolutionary line versus sectarianism. With the turns and zigzags of the Trotsky group, after our tendency broke with the CLA in 1934, revolutionary elements had to carry on the struggle against opportunism. The policy of the Trotsky group, vacillating between sectarianism and opportunism, mark them as a particular variety of centrist organization.

The struggle against centrism in the Trotsky organization as well as in other organizations is part of the struggle against opportunism toward which centrism drifts.

It is no accident that these questions are not even taken up in Trotsky's article. His theory has to drift along the line of his practice, and in his practical organizational policy, he is committed in the United States, to the support of the Cannon-Schachtman clique. The whole article is written from the standpoint of defending his organization and its leadership by confusing the issues of revolutionary policy. He cannot defend these people unless he gets down to their level. It is not possible for him to discuss seriously the question of how to build a revolutionary party when at the same time he has to assure Cannon and Schachtman of unlimited support in return for uncritical obedience.

If in the process, the most vital issues of the present period, the question of organizational principle, of how to build a revolutionary international party are lost and confused, so much the worse. If only the masses will read the right magazines and pamphlets put out by the right organizations with the right slogans, the revolution will yet be made. The subjective idealism that puts all faith in the written word, the organizational method of control from on top, the political line of vacillation between sectarian divorce from the masses and opportunistic chasing after them in the Socialist Party (in Belgium called the "organized working class"), these constitute the characteristic features of the Trotsky organizations and explain why they can only gain and not lose by systematically blurring the question of how to build the new International.

Evading Political Analysis of U.S. Groups

The brief section on the United States in Trotsky's article constitutes a complete evasion of the political differences. It has about as much political content and Marxian analysis as one would expect from a Cannon or a Schachtman answering a heckler at a Sunday night mass meeting.

It is a subjective, psychological caricature of two individuals. Yet it has a political purpose. As far as Field is concerned, it aims to discredit the organization with which he is connected and evade its political criticism by reducing both to a personal basis. On the other hand, it aims to put an obstacle in the way of the unification of the revolutionary groups which the LRWP has always stood for and which it is now engaged in helping to realize through the joint discussions with the Revolutionary Workers League (Oehler Group) and the Italian Left Fraction of Communism (Bordigists).

For these political reasons, it is necessary to deal with Trotsky's attack on Field although it is in the form of an attack upon an individual, making no mention of Caldis, Krehm, and others with whose activities Trotsky is quite familiar.

Considering its shortness, Trotsky's statement as to Field contains an amazing number of lies, which Trotsky knows to be lies. In the following paragraphs, we shall dispose of them briefly, giving documentary sources.

1. "Field in his entire political make-up, is a bourgeois radical who has acquired the economic views of Marxism". The sentence in itself is somewhat surprising. In the revolutionary movement, outside of circles under Stalinist influence where mere name-calling has become established practice, it is customary to give some reason for a characterization of such a final kind. Lenin in his polemics against Trotsky pointed out precisely in what the bourgeois influence upon Trotsky's policies consisted. Trotsky has been called a bourgeois radical long enough by the Stalinists to know that it is not permissible politically to call names without a political analysis which if carried out would show exactly the opposite. It is equally surprising to find that one can "acquire the economic views of Marxism" while retaining the political views of the bourgeoisie. On what super-dialectic ground does Trotsky separate Marxian politics from Marxian economics?

Trotsky did not always have this opinion of Field. When Field was working with him in Prinkipo, Trotsky wrote on October 7th, 1932, a letter reading as follows:

"Dear Field:

You undertake to introduce a little clarity into the question concerning the struggle between the fraction of Stalin and that fraction of Bolshevism to which I myself belong. It is not an easy task; the Soviet Union has fortunately many friends in the world. Not a few friends has also the Stalinist fraction....

Your article, written with a full knowledge of the literature of the question, can undoubtedly serve to eliminate some conscious or unconscious confusion. Precisely for this reason, I give with full willingness, answers to the questions which you asked me. I do not doubt that there will be some publications in America with sufficiently large political interests to give a place to

your article. For my part, I will await with the greatest interest what the opponents will say concerning the inventions which you have refuted and the facts which you have established.

Yours truly,

L. Trotsky"

This hardly looks like a bourgeois radical specializing in Marxian economics.

An Organization "Of His Own".

2. But a far more vicious slander is Trotsky's statement that "To have become a revolutionist Field would have had to work for a number of years as a disciplined soldier in a revolutionary proletarian organization; but he began by deciding to create a workers movement of his own". The slander is combined with falsification by the use of the quotation marks "of his own", as if Field had ever written or said anything of the kind.

Trotsky is here simply fabricating a myth when he knows the facts point to the opposite conclusion. In 1931, Field joined the CLA and contributed a series of articles to the Militant on the crisis of American capitalism as a result of which differences developed with Cannon and Schachtman. The basic clash was on the political question of the role of the Left Opposition.

The inevitable conclusion from Field's articles was that the present crisis was the beginning of a series which would go deeper and deeper, that there was no outlook for reformist and centrist parties, and that the revolutionary organization must participate immediately and directly in the class struggle instead of remaining on the outside as propagandists trying to influence the Communist Party. In this position, he was supported by many of the healthy revolutionary elements in the organization. Cannon and Schachtman on the other hand, held that because of the famous "relation of forces" the CLA must remain a propaganda group not participating in the class struggle directly but only through the Communist Party (See Thesis, July 22, 1931). The struggle developed until Field was expelled in May, 1932. In a statement to the membership committee, March 15, 1932, Field wrote as follows:

"The policy of looking to the official Communist Party as the only hope for the revolution is radically false. The Party is going through a process of degeneration, in common with the 3rd International. We cannot say at this time whether this process can be arrested in time, or whether it will go on to a point where the official Communist organization becomes a definite obstacle to the world revolution. To look to the Party alone means that one regards its restoration to a correct line, not in detail, but as part of a complete regeneration, as not only possible (which I believe) but inevitable, which is a proposition to which the Opposition has never committed itself. For otherwise, if there is a possibility that the processes of degeneration will not be stopped from within, even under the pressure of criticism from the Opposition, it remains as an elementary duty of the Left Opposition to build up an organization whose strength is not based on its ability to teach or influence the official Party, and which means independent action in principle."

Although Trotsky had come out for an independent party in the United States in 1929 (Militant, November 30, 1929), he did not say a word against the tail-endist thesis of July, 1931. After his expulsion Field went to Principe. As

Trotsky wrote in a letter to the National Committee of the CLA October 20, 1932, (Internal Bulletin No.4), "that he went to Europe seeking the way to the Left Opposition does not speak against Field but for him. This proved that he meant it seriously".

In Prinkipo, Field prepared a document on the "Perspectives of the Crisis and the Tasks of the Comintern". Trotsky had this sent to all the sections of the Left Opposition together with a foreword which concluded as follows:

"That the Left Opposition, in spite of its small numerical strength can be in a position to occupy an honorable place in the mass struggle is shown by the experience of the Belgian comrades. In any case, it is the task of the Left Opposition to unfold the questions clearly before the Party, to outline the general perspectives, to formulate slogans of struggle. Now, less than ever, can the Left Opposition be permitted to remain a closed propaganda group, standing aside from the real development of the class struggle.

Every Bolshevik-Leninist must be a member of one mass organization or another, above all, of a trade union. Only under this condition will our organizations keep their hand on the pulse of the proletariat and fulfill their role as a vanguard of the vanguard." (Published in the Left Opposition press generally, in 1932; in the Militant, August 12, 1933).

This was open and clear support of the position for which Field had been fighting. Perhaps that is why it was not printed in the Militant until August, 1933. After Field had been working with Trotsky for four months and was preparing to return to America, on November 13, 1932, Trotsky wrote to the National Committee of the CLA as follows: (Internal Bulletin No. 4):

"In regard to the future in America, the plans of Field are, insofar as it appears to me from conversations with him, the following: He returns fully determined to work for the Left Opposition and to find the way back to the League. But in any case not by the methods attempted by Weisbord. He will propose his services to the League without simultaneously raising the question of his reinstatement.... During the course of this work it will perhaps be proven that Field himself belongs in the organization. But this you will be able to judge better than we can from this distance. What I want to insist upon is that the relationship with Field be as much as possible so arranged that he can in the future also be utilized for our international theoretical works." (Underlining ours)

Was Trotsky planning to use a bourgeois radical for international theoretical works? So far no sign yet of wanting from the beginning to build an organization "of his own",

In January, 1933, Field returned to New York and immediately approached the NC along the lines stated above. On March 11, 1933, on the basis of a draft discussed with Comrade Trotsky in Prinkipo, he applied for reinstatement, which occurred promptly thereafter by unanimous vote of the membership.

The Factional Fight in the Old CLA.

By this time a violent, unprincipled factional fight was raging between Schachtman and Cannon, which assumed such proportions that it threatened to split the CLA and it was necessary for Trotsky to intervene. On March 7, 1933 (Internal Bulletin No. 13), he wrote that

"these antagonisms did not take on a political character. This has given and still gives to the struggle an excessively poisoned character in the absence of political content clear to everybody... The struggle of the groups has taken on such sharpness that a split automatically is placed on the order of the day... If it is difficult for us, the leading militants of the International Left Opposition, to grasp the motives of the ferocious struggle, the American workers including the members of the League itself, would be all the less capable of understanding the causes of a split. This manner of a split at the top would infinitely shatter the authority of both groups and compromise the authority of the Left Opposition in America for a long time to come."

To avoid these consequences, Trotsky wrote to - Field! On April 13, 1933, he wrote:

"It is very good that you and Esther are already back in the League. I congratulate you sincerely. It is necessary at all costs to prevent the sharpening of the internal struggle; the elements who do not belong to either of the two factions must impose a little more patience on the more intransigent comrades. A split at the present time would mean an irreparable catastrophe..."

Again, on May 5, 1933, he wrote more specifically to Field:

"The situation in the League disturbs us all here very much. Inasmuch as there are no clear differences of principle, it is necessary that a buffer be formed to attenuate the shocks and prevent a possible split."

One of the leading elements in the formation of this buffer desired by Trotsky was comrade Caldis who had consistently maintained a position for mass activity and against sectarianism in the CLA. Trotsky was kept fully advised of the formation and activities of this "independent buffer group" and actually took a position in support of the independent comrades even proposing that they be represented in the National Committee. (Internal Bulletin No. 14).

During this period, after the collapse of the CP in Germany, the ILO came out for a new International and the CLA verbally agreed to turn to mass activity. The comrades of the independent grouping, true to their principles, were the first to attempt to put this turn into practice. Comrade Caldis through his connections with the Amalgamated Food Workers took an active part in the organization campaign among the hotel workers and brought Comrade Field into this work. This is not the place to rehearse the events that led up to and followed the hotel strike. We have analyzed "the lessons of the hotel strike" in a pamphlet by that name, published by us in 1934.

For the purpose of this article, suffice it to say, that Cannon and Schachtman made their peace by a joint agreement to knife Field and Caldis in the back on a series of framed-up charges to which they had no opportunity to reply in the midst of the general strike. The fight of the two factions separately, and later jointly, against Field and Caldis was carried into the trade union work and accounts for the failure of the CLA to support the strike and to begin its frame-up tactics the moment the strike began, putting their clique interests above and against the interests of the workers.

Trotsky finally had to choose between the independents and the now reunited Cannon-Schachtman bureaucracy. These elements have as their only basis in the labor movement, their parasitic existence on the prestige of Trotsky, so that he could rely upon them for unquestioning obedience. For this reason, he supported

them in their strikebreaking tactics against Field and Galdis, and as his latest article shows, he is still committed to that choice.

Yet as late as September 9th, 1933, he was writing to Field:

"It is absolutely necessary that you participate with energy in the elaboration of our programmatic manifesto... The manifesto is now the most important step that we can and must make".

Still no trace of the bourgeois radical and although more than two years had elapsed since Field joined the CLA, he was still not building an organization "of his own".

And even when Field, Galdis, Krehm and others broke with the CLA in the U.S. and Canada in March, 1934, it was not form an organization "of their own" but to build an organization of which Field was not the leader. Only after Gitlow broke with the principles of the organization in September, 1934, and entered the Socialist Party, using Trotsky's French turn as his excuse, was it necessary for Field, Galdis and Krehm to build anew and take full responsibility for the organization, and at no time has Field been alone in the leadership of the organization.

The facts cited here condemn the whole regime of Trotsky and the ICL, and explain their inability to measure up to the central task of the present, the building of the new communist International. In order to play a progressive part in this task, they would have to re-examine their entire past and present position on the question of organization, and realize that "organization is not a matter of mere bookkeeping", and that "to have the correct idea alone is not sufficient". It would be necessary for them to make a clear and honest analysis of the "French turn", of the principle break with Marxism which is involved and its disastrous results. Only in this way can they get rid of the worthless baggage of the Cannons and Schactmans and re-establish contact with the revolutionary forces. Trotsky and the ICL have never built an organization, and we have no reason to suppose they ever will. For this is needed a new international center which will group together the forces that have broken with centrism, opportunism and sectarianism in the ICL as well as in the parties of the old Internationals.

Trotsky goes on to contrast Field with Weisbord. He thinks Weisbord is indubitably closer to a revolutionary type than Field. On what does he base this superficial psychological characterization? Is it because Weisbord calls Trotsky a traitor? Or because he has a fishwife's tongue? Because he supports national defense in a "progressive war" on the side of the Soviet Union? Or because he is anxious to identify himself with anti-parliamentarians like Guy Aldred of Bakunin House and syndicalist organizations?

Weisbord realizes his group cannot continue with the tendency towards imification of the groups rising in preparation for the next upswing in the revolutionary movement. When in danger he employs the tactic of the skunk, which emits a jet of matter very offensive to everyone in his neighborhood - except the skunk. In the January, 1936, issue of the Class Struggle, he has an article on the Gehler group in which he expresses resentment at the preliminary discussion of that organization with the LRPW and the ILFC. The resentment takes the form of a slanderous personal attack including a great many simply fraudulent inventions such as "agent of the Petroleum Institute", "broker" (occasionally amplified to "pawnbroker") etc. If there were a political characterization, it would be necessary to answer it. As it is, a clumsy effort to intimidate the RWL by throwing mud at the LRPW via Field, it may be worth while to describe briefly the actual situation of the Weisbord group.

Its political program is built very much like a bird's nest, borrowing a little from the Stalinists (national liberation for the Negroes, "progressive war" in defense of the Soviet Union, red trade unions), a little from Trotsky (Anglo-Russian committee, Chinese revolution, New International); a little from the syndicalists (trade union policy); a little from the anarchists (lynch the lynchers, open the warehouses), together with contributions of his own (self-determination for the American Indian, no second-class postage, Cannon's raid on his library, etc.); not to disturb the dead, his advocacy of the labor party and of the bloc with Lovestone against the Stalinists. With all this, no conception whatever of the nature of the party or the difference between the party and the group, any more than the difference between principles and tactics.

Organizationally, his group is so constructed that it must fall to pieces at the first contact with a real living movement, and therefore must be carefully shielded from it. With all the blabbering about training leadership, the group does not train cadres but concentrates initiative and responsibility in the hands of Weisbord. The group, not participating in any real political life, has to be kept in a state of artificial excitement which will convince them that they actually mean something in the revolutionary movement. This is done by painting themselves a redder red than anybody else's red; if Trotsky wants a 4th International, they will build a 5th; if Trotsky wants to dump his organization into the Socialist Party, they will join the IWW; if the Stalinists want a black Soviet republic, they will outtrump them, with a fictitious Negro Chamber of Labor and "lynch the lynchers".

It is impossible to see how such a group with such policies and leadership can contribute anything toward building a genuine revolutionary International.

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